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REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 15, 16, 26, and 39 are amended. No claims have been canceled or added. Accordingly, after entry of this Amendment, claims 3-12, 15-24, 26-36, and 39-47 will be pending in this Application, claims 1-2, 13-14, 25, and 37-38 having been canceled previously.

In the Office Action dated August 27, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 3-5, 8, 15-17, 20, 39, 41, and 46-47 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Gagnon et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,523,634). Claims 4-5, 16-17, 26, 28, and 34-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Tsutsumikoshi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,535,869). The Examiner also rejected claims 6-7, 18-19, and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Tsutsumikoshi et al. in view of Tarahomi (U.S. Patent No. 6,299,244). The Applicants respectfully disagree with each of the rejections and, therefore, respectfully traverse same.

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 9-12, 21-24, 29-33, 40, and 42-27 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

All of the pending claims in the application are patentable over the prior art cited by the Examiner because all of the claims now specifically recite a combination of elements including, for example, raised support portions that define at least one support plane. This Amendment is supported at least by the disclosure provided by paragraph [0038] and the drawings supporting the specification as a whole. Since no single reference or combination of references discloses or suggests the combinations now recited, each of claims 3-12, 15-24, 26-36, and 39-47 are patentable thereover.

Gagnon et al. cannot be relied upon to anticipate any of the claims presented herein. While the Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner that the raised support portions are located on any part of the vehicle described by Gagnon et al., the Applicants have defined

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the raised support portions such that they define over Gagnon et al. The Applicants respectfully submit that the raised support portions identified by the Examiner do not define at least one raised support plane as now claimed. As a result, the Applicants respectfully submit that Gagnon et al. does not describe each and every feature as recited by the claims and, therefore, cannot anticipate the claims.

In addition, the Applicants respectfully submit that neither Tsutsumikoshi et al. nor Tarahomi describe or suggest this feature in combination with the remaining features recited by the claims. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that these two references cannot be combined properly with Gagnon et al. to render obvious any of claims 3-12, 15-24, 26-36, and 39-47. Accordingly, the claims are patentable thereover.

All rejections and objections have been addressed. It is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any questions or concerns regarding this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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